

BC Health Authority Shared Services Organization

Province-wide Shared Services. Better Value

Supply Chain Services: The importance of physician involvement

Who we are and what we do

The BC Health Authority Shared Services Organization (SSO) is now accountable for the provision of Supply Chain services to all of BC's health authorities. This means SSO manages all contracts for health authority goods, supplies, equipment and services. SSO Supply Chain services include procurement, warehousing and logistics, and ancillary services. With about 1000 employees located in six health authorities, this service manages over \$1.4 billion in total annual spending. It is estimated that \$150 million in savings will be generated by this provincial integrated service model in the first five years. Since SSO assumed accountability for Supply Chain services in February, 2009, the total savings to-date have already reached \$90 million as a result of provincial contracts for cardiac, renal dialysis, and operating room supplies.

Clinical input – physicians have a key role

SSO's clinical engagement process seeks to ensure physicians have meaningful input into the selection of, and contracting for, supplies and equipment they use as part of their clinical practice. Physician involvement is also essential for identifying which products are appropriate for standardization within BC's health care system. Physicians will participate at various stages in the acquisition of clinical products, including identification of provincial clinical needs and evaluating the alternatives presented by suppliers.

By participating on evaluation committees, physicians help assess potential products for clinical quality and safety. Establishing minimum thresholds for clinician and physician quality assessments ensures that only clinically acceptable products will be chosen.

How physicians are included in the process

Clinical involvement from across the health authorities is important at key points in the contracting process, particularly during the user requirements and evaluation phases.

For province-wide contracts or product catalogue standardization initiatives, each health authority will assign a clinical representative to a provincial evaluation committee. For complex, clinically sensitive products it is recommended this representative be a physician.

The evaluation committee establishes product specifications, assists in development of RFP tenders, evaluates product performance which may involve clinical trials, recommends preferred products and utilization standards. The evaluation committee's provincial recommendation is then taken to the health authorities and SSO Board for adoption.

Getting involved as a participating physician

It is recognized that getting involved in the evaluation process will require time, energy and commitment. However, the reward is being part of a process that will impact the products and services used to deliver medical care around the province. Ideally, you are involved in clinical practice and feel comfortable representing the views of your peers. As an evaluation committee member, you will receive project and administrative support to elicit input from your peers as their representative and in disseminating information to your colleagues that will allow you to keep them informed. If you are a non-salaried physician, you will be compensated for your time on a provincial evaluation committee.

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As a physician representative you can:

- Ensure patient and care provider safety is not compromised
- Determine
 - Appropriate clinical evaluation criteria
 - Product specifications
 - Products to be included in a standardized catalogue
- Recommend service level standards

Reviewing the process

SSO's physician engagement process will require improvements and changes over time. The SSO Client Services Committee, which includes representatives from all six health authorities, is a standing committee that advises the SSO on issues pertaining to the quality of service delivery and business related matters. To ensure that clinical engagement and communications continues to evolve and improve with time and experience, the VP's of Medicine / Senior Medical Directors will be invited to join the SSO Client Services Committee meeting twice per year when the focus of the meeting will be on clinical engagement and communications and related issues. Feedback from the BCMA will also be sought as part of this commitment to continuous improvement.

For more information:

If you would like additional information on our specific activities, please see the following information sheets which are available from our website at www.bchealthsso.ca.

BC Health Authority Shared Services Organization – General Information: Supply Chain Services

BC Health Authority Shared Services Organization – Contract Management

BC Health Authority Shared Services Organization – A Guide to Value Adds

Or contact us at: SupplyChain@bchealthsso.ca